

Directive 311.1  
7/2/90

POSITION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

- I.  
PURPOSE
- This Directive states the policy and general requirements by which the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Position Management Program will operate.
- II.  
REPLACEMENT  
HIGHLIGHTS
- This Directive replaces AMS Directive 311.1, Position Management Program, dated 6/21/85.
- III.  
AUTHORITIES
- This Directive is published in accordance with:
- A. Title 5, United States Code, Chapter 51, Classification.
- B. Title 5, United States Code, Chapter 53, Pay Rates and Systems, Subchapter IV, Prevailing Rate Systems.
- C. Federal and Departmental Personnel Manuals:
1. FPM/DPM Chapter 312, Position Management.
  2. FPM/DPM Chapter 511, Position Classification.
- D. Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-64, Position Management Systems and Employment Ceilings.
- E. Departmental Regulation 1010-1, Organization.
- IV.  
POLICY
- It is AMS policy to assure that:
- A. Positions are carefully planned, structured, and staffed to make the most effective use of human resources at the lowest practical expenditure to accomplish assigned missions;
- B. Managers and supervisors assume and carry out an active and positive role in the operation of the position management system; and
- C. There is continual coordination among managers and supervisors and administrative management personnel to assure efficient planning and utilization of resources, including strict observance of full-time equivalent employment ceilings.
- V.  
DEFINITIONS
- A. Position Management. The structuring of positions, functions, and organizations in a manner that optimizes efficiency, productivity, and organizational effectiveness.
- B. Supervisor. An individual with responsibility for getting work done through others with accountability to Agency management for the quantity and quality of work done. Supervisory functions include planning, organizing, and reviewing work; administering personnel matters; and, dealing effectively with employees and union representatives about

employee-management concerns.

C. Manager. An individual who directs the work of an organization, is held accountable for the success of specific line or staff programs, monitors the progress of the organization toward goals, and makes appropriate adjustments.

D. Fragmentation. The unnecessary splitting of an organization into many small segments. This splitting results in the small units becoming so specialized as to restrict an employee's potential contribution, significantly restricting communication and actions between units, and causing workload fluctuations.

E. Layering. The presence of excessive and unnecessary levels in the chain of command. Layering restricts the free movement of ideas and work products since they must be evaluated and restated at each level, and often results in top management being unaware of how decisions have been made at lower levels.

F. Full-Performance Level. The highest level of a career ladder position at which an employee has learned the full range of duties in a specific occupation. All jobs below the full-performance level are developmental, through which each employee in the occupation may progress to full-performance.

G. Span of Control. The span of control is the number of employees that can be effectively supervised by one individual.

#### VI. OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the AMS Position Management Program is to establish and maintain an organizational structure and staffing pattern which will maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of program operations. Specific objectives are to:

A. Establish and maintain the minimum number of positions needed to accomplish missions, goals, and objectives.

B. Establish and maintain clear statements of functional responsibility for each organizational unit to avoid overlap of responsibility and duplication of effort.

C. Minimize the number of organizational levels to avoid layering.

D. Establish and maintain efficient organization units to avoid fragmentation.

E. Minimize the number of management and supervisory positions including deputies, assistants, and assistants to, consistent with span of control needs. Generally, deputy, assistant and assistant to positions are only established where the span of control is too broad for one individual, or where the head of the unit is frequently removed from the office due to field travel or meetings and the deputy or assistant must make major decisions which cannot be assigned on a part-time or rotating basis.

F. Assign higher level duties to as few positions as possible.

G. Maintain a balance between clerical and professional positions.

H. Maintain an average grade level consistent with the average complexity level of the work performed.

I. Maintain a current organization and staffing chart for each organizational unit.

VII. RESPONSIBILITIES  
A. Administrator. Final accountability for the AMS Position Management Program rests with the Administrator. This includes the primary responsibility for the organizational structure and position management practices within the Agency. The Administrator's approval is required for:

1. Organizational and geographic changes that require Departmental approval (refer to Departmental Regulation 1010-1).

2. Classification and employment actions requiring prior approval from the Department and/or the Office of Personnel Management.

3. Organizational changes down to and including Branch levels or equivalent.

B. Deputy Administrators must:

1. Assure that the AMS Position Management Program policies and objectives are established and carried out within their organizational units.

2. Assure that subordinate managers and supervisors consult with appropriate administrative management staffs during the planning, development, and implementation phases of organizational and staffing proposals.

C. The Deputy Administrator, Management, in addition to the above responsibilities, serves as the AMS Position Management Coordinator. This includes responsibility to:

1. Assure that full-time equivalent employment is maintained within approved ceilings and within available funds.

2. Provide consultative assistance to program officials and line managers.

3. Assure that appropriate administrative management staffs actively participate in the planning, development, and implementation phases of organizational and staffing proposals.

4. Assure that all positions at the GS/GM-13 grade level and above are reviewed by the personnel officer prior to establishment.

D. Managers and Supervisors must assure that the AMS Position Management Program policies and objectives are established and maintained within their organizational units. This includes responsibility to:

1. Assure organizational and staffing charts are current and accurate.
2. Assure position descriptions are current and accurate.
3. Review vacant positions to determine whether the duties are required, can be eliminated, assigned to an existing position, or modified to permit performance at a lower grade level.
4. Propose organizational structures and staffing patterns which will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of program operations.
5. Consult with appropriate administrative management staffs during the planning, development, and implementation phases of organization and staffing proposals.

E. Management Divisions and Staffs. Within its functional area, each Management Division or Staff will provide technical assistance and guidance to program officials and line managers. This includes responsibility to:

1. Actively participate in the planning, development, and implementation phases of organization and staffing proposals.
2. Prepare or assist in the preparation of the requisite documentation associated with organizational and staffing proposals.
3. Review organizational and staffing proposals for completeness and adequacy of documentation and compliance with applicable policies and regulations.
4. Establish and maintain the primary records system for the administration and control of organization, staffing, and position management documentation.

VIII.  
PROGRAM  
REQUIREMENTS

A. Vacancy Control. Prior to filling a vacant position, the supervisor of the position, in consultation with appropriate program administrative personnel and/or administrative management representatives, must:

1. Determine whether the duties can be eliminated, reassigned to other positions, or restructured at a lower grade level.
2. Assure that the position description is accurate.
3. Assure that sufficient funds and ceilings are available.
4. Verify that the position classification is accurate and fully supportable.

B. Requirements for Establishing New Positions.

1. The existing position structure and functions of the organizational unit where the position will be located will be reviewed by position classification specialists to assure that proposed duties do not conflict with or duplicate responsibilities already assigned.

2. The grade structure of the organizational unit where the position will be located will be reviewed by position classification specialists to assure that the proposed grade is consistent with the unit's position management objectives and fits logically within the Agency's existing position structure.

C. Position Management Surveys. The Classification Branch, Personnel Division, will assist supervisors and managers in carrying out their position management responsibilities by conducting position management surveys to:

1. Review position management objectives for the organizational unit.

2. Provide data on position management indicators for the organizational unit, including statistics regarding average grade, supervisory/employee ratios, number of positions above the full-performance level, etc.

3. Review the need for positions.

4. Assess the accuracy of the classification of positions in the organizational unit.

5. Promote the effective grouping of duties and responsibilities among positions and organizational units.

D. Staffing Charts. Each organizational unit which is headed by an officially designated supervisor or manager is required to establish and maintain for its records a current staffing chart or listing which:

1. Indicates the lines of authority of all positions assigned to the organization (i.e., echelons under the direction of the unit head).

2. Reflects the title, series, and current grade level as well as full-performance grade level of each position allocated to the organizational unit.

Daniel D. Haley  
Administrator

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